

A photograph of hands holding white paper cutouts of a family (two adults and two children) holding hands, set against a warm orange background. The cutouts are simple, stylized figures.

A PROPOSED NATIONAL POPULATION POLICY

NPG believes a national policy designed to slow, halt, and eventually reverse U.S. population growth is critically needed. (See the Position Papers and the FORUM series in the Publications List on our website, www.NPG.org.) In this paper, we offer a series of specific proposals for accomplishing that goal. We recognize the political resistance in the way of such policies, but we still think it is useful to set forth our recommendations in one compact document for those who may come to share our concerns.

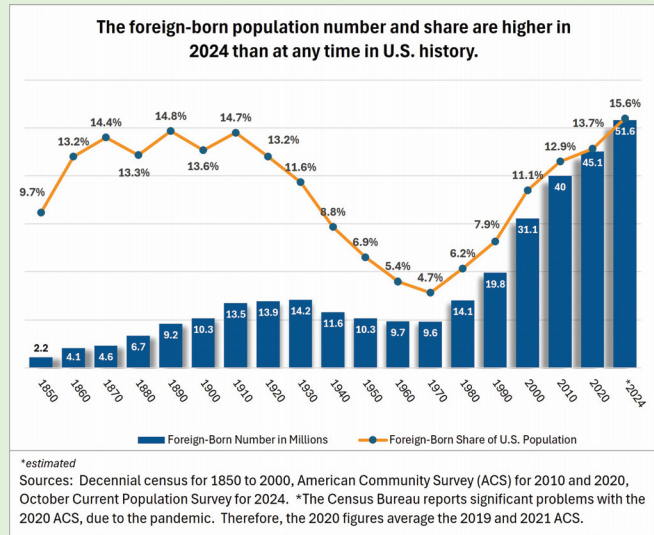
A population policy for the United States must come from the realization that the perils of not having a population policy far outweigh the inconveniences of having one. Still, the federal government (and sometimes state and local governments) must take certain specific actions to reach a consensus. This paper will suggest what actions they will need to take.

POLICY 1 IMMIGRATION

Immigration, in its many forms, has become the main driver of America’s population growth. A Census Bureau analysis for 2024 estimated that 2.5 million immigrants – legal and illegal – entered the country that year. The foreign-born population is estimated to have risen by just 1.8 million, the difference reflecting deaths and emigration among the existing foreign-born. The total U.S. population is estimated to have grown by the same 1.8 million in 2024.

Bottom line: The foreign-born population (15.6% of total U.S. population) is projected to account for virtually all U.S. population growth in 2024.

The total foreign-born population is projected to reach a record 51.6 million in 2024; as recently as 2010 it was 40 million.

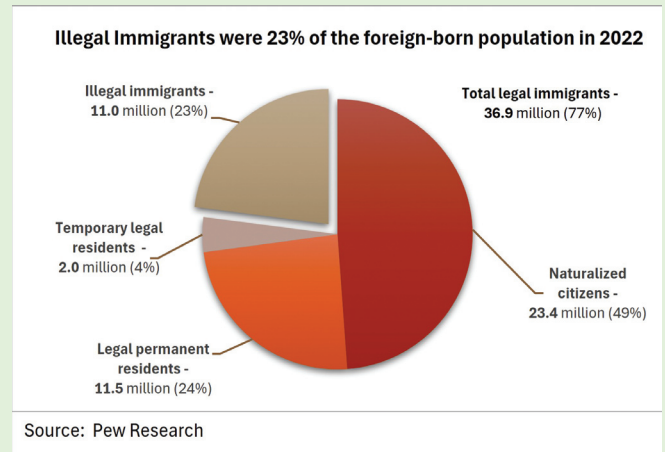


pathway is now largely ungoverned by any effective numerical limits or rational comprehensive management.

NPG advocates for the complete elimination of illegal immigration and an 80% reduction in current legal immigration, to no more than 200,000 per year.

ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION: RAISING THE COSTS AND RISKS

About one-quarter of all immigrants are living in the U.S. illegally. The annual influx of illegal immigrants is made up of 500,000 to 600,000 aliens who sneak across America’s borders, use fraud to pass through our ports of entry, or acquire a temporary visa (for example, a student or tourist visa) and remain in the U.S. permanently, without authorization.



It goes without saying that existing laws to reduce the number of illegals coming into this country do not work. The laws are not being enforced, and funding is scarce.

PLAIN TALK AND TOUGH STRATEGIES FOR IMMIGRATION CURBS

There are two interacting streams in today’s mass immigration: legal and illegal. Both bring in people for extended or permanent stays, adding them to the nation’s resource-consuming population base.

The new arrivals compete for jobs, particularly with less skilled native-born Americans. Each

Legal immigration is also up – but for the wrong reasons. A free government mobile app, introduced by U.S. Customs and Border Protection in 2021, allows individuals who would have crossed illegally to schedule appointments at legal ports of entry. CBP reports 1.4 million migrants used the app to enter “legally” over the past two years. The same app – CBP One – has drawn scrutiny for failing to vet immigrants adequately.

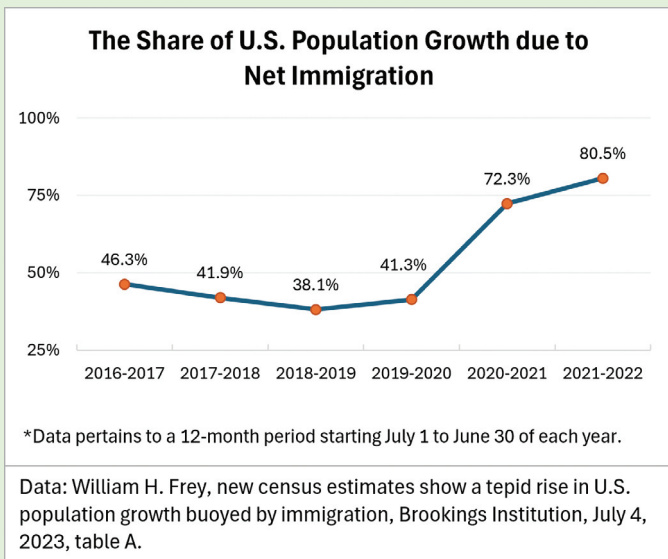
Among policies that could reasonably be enforced to reduce illegal immigration, NPG suggests the following:

- Mandatory imposition of fines and/or jail terms – for illegal entry, illegal presence, and fraud (including identity theft).
- A non-porous SW border wall, with sufficient manpower and funds to police and maintain it.
- A streamlined deportation process which, until recently, has been mired in interminable appeals.
- Mandatory use of E-Verify by U.S. employers, government agencies, banks, health care providers, realtors, and other entities that interact with immigrants, to detect illegal aliens and ensure their removal.
- Sizeable increases in the number of investigators, border patrol agents, federal attorneys, judges, and more detention space and personnel to make these steps work.
- The elimination of Sanctuary cities.

REDUCED IMMIGRATION: GOOD FOR THE U.S. AND FOR THE WORLD

Continued population growth through mass immigration will mean greater income inequality, environmental malaise, and increased competition for energy and other resources in the United States.

The nation historically has been the most generous receiver of immigrants in the world. Now, the U.S. needs to be generous to the world in other ways, by curbing its consumption of goods and services that generate CO² and other greenhouse gases that exacerbate global warming.



POLICY 2 FERTILITY

Women in traditional societies have tended to regard the number of their children as either a matter of fate or their husband’s preference. In industrial societies, rights and opportunities for women, and the cost of rearing and educating children, generate strong incentives for lower fertility.

The Total Fertility Rate of US-born women has been below replacement for decades - but our population still grows. Net immigration is the reason. The fertility rate of the educated and prosperous is lower than for the poor and ill-educated, but even so it is below replacement level for American Indians, non – Hispanic Whites and Blacks. Hispanics, on the other hand, are far above replacement level. That perhaps is associated with the recent arrival of many of them from high-fertility societies and with the very low work force participation rate of young Hispanic women. Fertility would not be a problem if they adopted the levels of other groups, but this can only be accomplished through non-discriminatory policies.

Unlike migration, fertility in the United States is not determined by government policies, but governments can influence and encourage family planning. The key is to persuade women to stop at two children. That would lead to a population turnaround in this century, even with annual net immigration of 200,000, since some women stop at one child or choose to have none at all. Already, at least 62 percent of American women stop at one or two.

THE QUESTION IS: HOW DO WE CONVINCE THE OTHERS?

Among the policies that would help discourage Americans from growing their family beyond two children are the following:

- Promote the concept of the two-child family and campaign for support from political leaders.
- Educate Americans about the benefits of smaller families.
- Create programs aimed at helping young women enter the workforce with the job skills needed to make a decent living.
- Ensure that free access to birth control information and materials is made available to women, married and unmarried. That should include, as a last resort, the availability of abortion.
- Eliminate IRS policies that extend tax benefits for children beyond the second child.
- Encourage Public Housing Authorities to prioritize housing for families with fewer than three children.

POLICY
3

ASSISTANCE TO OTHERS

The immigration-driven population growth that we face today is largely a product of high fertility, unemployment, and climate change disasters playing out in Central America, Mexico, and sub-Saharan Africa.

The top countries of origin of those entering via the SW border of the US – Venezuela, Cuba, Mexico, Haiti, and Nicaragua – have total fertility rates well above the 1.6 babies per mother found in the U.S.

The U.S. government has supported family planning and reproductive health efforts for nearly 60 years and is the largest Family Planning/Reproductive Health donor in the world. Funding is constrained by several legislative and policy requirements, including a ban on the direct use of foreign aid for abortion (the Helms Amendment, which has been in place since *Roe v Wade* was passed in 1973) and the Mexico City Policy, which banned foreign NGOs from receiving foreign aid unless they certify they do not pay for abortions.

Each year, approximately 47,000 women worldwide die from complications associated with unsafe abortions. Data shows that access to modern contraception reduces unintended pregnancies and the incidence of abortion.

We cannot expect that a world divided between the prosperous and the desperate will be a peaceful one. That alone is a sufficient reason to help poor countries address the problem of overpopulation. Beyond that, success in bringing birth rates down will mean more employment and better wages for coming generations – which will lessen the drive to migrate and thus mitigate our own immigration problems.

- We should stop playing politics with our population assistance programs and put them on a stable footing.
- We need to change the priorities in our overseas aid programs to ensure that population programs abroad are funded at whatever level the recipient governments can effectively use.
- We should encourage changes that promote the status and self-esteem of women in less developed countries, which demonstrably leads to smaller families with healthier and better-educated children.

We judge that a sustainable population for the United States should not exceed 150 million, and should probably not exceed two billion for the world. Understanding that the U.S. is now home to more than 341 million people – and that world population now exceeding 8.1 billion – it will take several generations and many diligent citizens to accomplish this goal. Failure to set forth on this path, however, will prove to be even more challenging and environmentally disastrous. We simply must start now. We must agree to drastically reduced fertility rates worldwide, and the United States must reduce its legal immigration numbers.

NPG's Proposed National Population Policy is a collective effort. Edwin Rubenstein and Roxan Ordal wrote the majority of the text. Deborah Miller and Carol Wickline collaborated to create the tables and graphs, while Theresa Mickendrow and Diane Saco reviewed and offered suggestions to clarify any ambiguous language. Kelly Clipp, NPG's graphic artist, pulled it all together to give us a visually appealing final document. I am thankful to every one of them.

-Craig Lewis, Executive Director